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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2014

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/69/473/Add.1)*]

69/238. Operational activities for development of the United Nations system

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 67/226 of 21 December 2012 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/14 of 14 July 2014 on progress in the implementation of resolution 67/226,

Recalling also the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals and its outcome document [1] and the outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals,[2]

Reaffirming the importance of the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development, through which the General Assembly establishes key system-wide policy orientations for development cooperation and country-level modalities of the United Nations system,

Recalling the role of the Economic and Social Council in providing coordination and guidance to the United Nations system in order to ensure that policy orientations established by the General Assembly are implemented on a system-wide basis in accordance with Assembly resolutions 57/270 B of 23 June 2003, 61/16 of 20 November 2006, 67/226, 68/1 of 20 September 2013 and other relevant resolutions,

Reaffirming that the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system should be, inter alia, their universal, voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and their multilateralism, as well as their ability to respond to the development needs of programme countries in a flexible manner, and that the operational activities are carried out for the benefit of programme countries, at the request of those countries and in accordance with their own policies and priorities for development,

Affirming that the operational activities for development of the United Nations system should provide a key contribution to the implementation of the ambitious

[1] Resolution 65/1.

[2] Resolution 68/6.

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and transformational objectives of the post-2015 development agenda, once adopted, and should therefore be improved, including the ability of the United Nations development system, in line with its mandate, to assist countries in responding to the challenges of sustainable development,

Recognizing the importance and catalytic role of predictable official development assistance for international development,

Taking note of the report of and the note by the Secretary-General submitted to the Economic and Social Council at the operational activities segment of its substantive session of 2014,[3]

1. *Takes note* of the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the selection and appointment process for United Nations resident coordinators, including preparation, training and support provided for their work,[4] and the note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination thereon;[5]

2. *Also takes note* of the report of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation on its eighteenth session,[6] and welcomes the decisions adopted at that session;[7]

3. *Recalls* Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/14 on operational activities for development, and expresses appreciation for the guidance provided by the Council on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226;

4. *Acknowledges* the request by the Economic and Social Council that the United Nations funds and programmes make every effort to continue to improve monitoring and data-collection methods, with a view to contributing to the further enhancement of the analytical quality of the report of the Secretary-General on operational activities for development of the United Nations system;

5. *Underlines* the need to better reflect the multidimensional nature of development and poverty, as well as the importance of developing a common understanding among Member States and other stakeholders of that multidimensionality and reflecting it in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, and in this regard invites Member States, supported by the international community, to consider developing complementary measurements, including methodologies and indicators for measuring human development, that better reflect that multidimensionality;

6. *Reaffirms* the importance of the contribution of operational activities for development to the national capacity development and development effectiveness of the United Nations development system in addressing the key areas identified in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, recalls in this regard its request to the organizations of the United Nations development system to develop, for the consideration of Member States, a common approach for measuring progress in capacity development, including measures to ensure sustainability, as well as to develop, in a manner consistent with their mandates, specific frameworks aimed at enabling programme countries, upon their request, to design, monitor and evaluate

[3] A/69/63-E/2014/10 and A/68/658-E/2014/7.

[4] A/69/125.

[5] A/69/125/Add.1.

[6] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 39* (A/69/39).

[7] Ibid., chap. I.

results in the development of their capacity to achieve national development goals and strategies, and invites the Secretary-General to provide comprehensive and evidence-based updates on measures taken in this regard in his 2015 annual report on the implementation of resolution 67/226;

7. *Requests* the funds and programmes of the United Nations development system, and invites the specialized agencies, to consider the findings and observations related to national capacity gaps repeatedly highlighted by programme countries to be addressed through the work of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, including through the strengthening and use of national capacities, and to report to their governing bodies in 2015 with recommendations for implementation in this regard;

8. *Reiterates* that core resources, because of their untied nature, continue to be the bedrock of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and in this regard recognizes the need for the organizations of the development system to address, on a continuous basis, the imbalance between core and non-core resources and to report to the Economic and Social Council in 2015, as part of their regular reporting, on the measures taken to address this imbalance;

9. *Notes with concern* that the percentage of core resources in the overall funding for operational activities has declined, also notes that non-core resources represent an important contribution to the overall resource base of the United Nations development system and complement core resources in supporting operational activities for development, thus contributing to an increase in total resources, while noting the need to make non-core resources more flexible and aligned with strategic plans and national priorities, and recognizes that non-core resources are not a substitute for core resources and that they pose challenges, in particular restricted earmarked funding such as single-donor project-specific funding, by potentially increasing transaction costs, fragmentation, competition and overlap among entities and providing disincentives for pursuing a system-wide focus, strategic positioning and coherence, and that they may also potentially distort programme priorities regulated by intergovernmental bodies and processes;

10. *Welcomes* the progress made by the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies in ensuring that available and projected core and non-core resources are consolidated within an integrated budgetary framework, based on the priorities of their respective strategic plans, and encourages all entities that have not already done so to develop such integrated frameworks in their next budget cycle;

11. *Recalls* the concern expressed in its resolutions 67/226 and 68/229 of 20 December 2013 over the lack of progress in the development and operationalization of the concept of "critical mass" of core resources, while noting the adoption in 2014 by the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services of decisions 2014/24 and 2014/25 and the adoption by the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund of decision 2014/17, in which they noted common principles for the concept of critical mass of resources and core resources as developed by United Nations funds and programmes and requested the funds and programmes to develop and present resource mobilization strategies for the consideration of their executive boards in 2015;

12. *Stresses* the need to avoid the use of core or regular resources to subsidize activities financed by non-core or extrabudgetary resources, reaffirms that the guiding principle governing the financing of all non-programme costs should be based on full cost recovery from core and non-core funding sources, proportionally, and in this regard notes the timelines agreed by the executive boards of the United

Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) for an independent and external assessment, to be performed in 2016, of the consistency and alignment of the new cost-recovery methodology with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review;

13. *Notes with appreciation* the work undertaken by those organizations of the United Nations development system that have made efforts to align their strategic plans, frameworks and budgets with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, and encourages all organizations of the United Nations development system that have not done so to take further steps in this regard;

14. *Recognizes* the importance of continuing to strengthen and improve the results-focused delivery of operational activities for development of the funds and programmes of the United Nations system in order to maximize their support for accelerating progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, especially in the least developed countries and other developing countries that are lagging behind in meeting the targets, as well as their support for the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda;

15. *Welcomes* the integration of poverty eradication, as the overarching priority, into the strategic plans of some United Nations system organizations, in accordance with their mandates;

16. *Reaffirms* its call, in its resolution 67/226, for the organizations of the United Nations development system to assign the highest priority to the eradication of poverty, and in this regard acknowledges the request by the Economic and Social Council to the United Nations funds and programmes to include in their regular reporting to the Council information on steps taken, in accordance with their mandates, on the scaling up of efforts to address the root causes of extreme poverty and hunger, the sharing of good practices, lessons learned, strategies, programmes and policies, including capacity-building, employment generation, education, vocational training, rural development and the mobilization of resources, which are aimed at achieving poverty eradication and promoting the active participation of those living in poverty in the design and implementation of such programmes and policies;

17. *Requests* all organizations of the United Nations development system to consider the post-2015 development agenda, once adopted, in the context of midterm reviews and the elaboration of strategic plans and frameworks, in order to ensure consistency and alignment with the agenda;

18. *Recalls* the requests contained in its resolution 67/226 on strengthening South-South cooperation, in this regard notes the progress made by some organizations of the United Nations development system in mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation into their key policies, strategic frameworks, operational activities and budgets, and welcomes the recommendations and measures, as set out in decision 18/1 of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation,[7] to strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation, including through the improved allocation of resources across the United Nations development system, including the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation;

19. *Stresses* that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation;

20. *Recalls* the policy for independent system-wide evaluation of United Nations operational activities for development, reaffirms in this regard the decision in its resolution 68/229 that two pilot independent system-wide evaluations should be conducted in 2014 on the themes set out therein, subject to the provision and

availability of extrabudgetary resources, as outlined in the policy, notes with concern the lack of progress in this regard, reiterates its invitation to countries in a position to do so to contribute additional extrabudgetary resources for the effective and accelerated implementation of the evaluations in 2015, and requests the interim coordination mechanism for system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system to provide an update on progress in the implementation of the evaluations at the operational activities segment of the substantive session of 2015 of the Economic and Social Council;

21. *Recognizes* the need to review the composition and functioning of the governing structures of the United Nations funds and programmes, welcomes in this regard Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/14, and calls for early reforms of those governance structures;

22. *Reaffirms* the importance of achieving diversification in the composition of the resident coordinator system in terms of geographical distribution and gender, also reaffirms the importance of the participation of all United Nations agencies, funds and programmes on an equal footing in the resident coordinator system, requests the Secretary-General to make every effort in this regard to ensure the full application of these principles in the appointment of resident coordinators, encourages all agencies to nominate qualified candidates for the Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre, and requests the United Nations development system to continue to identify solutions in order to strengthen its ability to efficiently recruit and deploy appropriately senior and experienced resident coordinators who meet the highest standards of integrity;

23. *Welcomes* the dialogues held at the operational activities segment of the Economic and Social Council of its substantive session of 2014 regarding the role of the United Nations development system in the changing development landscape and the need to align the United Nations system to address emerging challenges, reaffirms in this regard the decision of the Council to convene a transparent and inclusive dialogue involving Member States and all relevant stakeholders on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system, with a view to tackling the interlinkages between the alignment of functions, funding practices and governance structures of the United Nations funds and programmes, including early reform of their composition and functioning, the capacity and impact of the United Nations development system, partnership approaches and organizational arrangements, within the context of the post-2015 development agenda, and looks forward to these discussions being reflected in the report of the Secretary-General on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review to be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration and action by Member States during the quadrennial comprehensive policy review in 2016, with a view to fulfilling the role of the General Assembly in establishing key system-wide policy orientations for development cooperation and country-level modalities for the United Nations development system.

75th plenary meeting
19 December 2014